

CITY OF NEWARK, NJ'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Willie Bradwell, December 8, 1997

Q: This is December 8, 1997. I'm at the home of Mrs. Willie Bradwell in Newark, New Jersey. Miss Bradwell, I just want to take a minute, to let you, to introduce the project to you. This is going to be an oral history, and it will be in the archives of the Krueger-Scott Cultural Center on High Street. And I'd like to ask you a little bit about your history as a resident of Newark. And basically, we're covering the period of the black migration into Newark, basically between 1910 and 1970. So but you don't have to confine your comments to that, but that's pretty much what the project is about. So would you repeat your name for me?

Bradwell: My name is Willie Dean Bradwell.

Q: And what's your date of birth?

Bradwell: My date of birth is June 19, 1921.

Q: And where were you born?

Bradwell: I was born in Georgia, Edison, Calvin County..

Q: Okay, what was your primary occupation?

Bradwell: Factory worker.

Q: Did you ever do anything else? Did you have a secondary career?

Bradwell: I did some domestic work when I first came into Jersey.

Q: And how far did you go in school?

Bradwell: High school.

Q: Were you married?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: Okay. How many times did you marry?

Bradwell: Twice.

Q: Okay. Tell us about your first husband. When did you marry him; how old were you?

Bradwell: I married him when I was sixteen.

Q: Okay. What was name?

Bradwell: His name was Mack Hanson.

Q: Okay. And where did you marry him?

Bradwell: In Edison.

Q: How did you meet Mack?

Bradwell: We grew up together.

Q: So, okay, that pretty much answers how long you knew each other before you married. And

what kind of work did Mack do?

Bradwell: He was a mechanic.

Q: What kind of mechanic?

Bradwell: Automobile.

Q: Do you have any children?

Bradwell: One child born from that marriage.

Q: And where was he born?

Bradwell: He was born in Georgia.

Q: Okay and what's his name?

Bradwell: His name is Kenneth.

Q: Okay, what about your second husband?

Bradwell: My second husband I met in New Jersey. He was originally from Georgia.

Q: But you met him in New Jersey.

Bradwell: I met him in New Jersey.

Q: In Newark or?

Bradwell: In Newark.

Q: Yeah. So how did you meet him?

Bradwell: At the bus stop on the way to work.

Q: At the bus stop.

Bradwell: Yes, we took the same bus every morning going to work.

Q: Oh, you gals are flirting. Okay. And how long did you know each other before you got married?

Bradwell: Approximately three years.

Q: And what kind of work, oh, what was his name?

Bradwell: His name was Joseph Lee Bradwell.

Q: Okay. And what kind of work did he do?

Bradwell: He was in construction.

Q: Do you want to expand on that a little bit?

Bradwell: Building in housing as plastering and that type of construction.

Q: Okay. Did you have any other, were there any other relationships that you had other than these two husbands that you want to talk about? I mean, you can feel free to refuse any of these



questions at any time.

Bradwell: Well, there were other relationships, but none that were serious.

Q: Okay. What was your father's name?

Bradwell: My father's name was George Collins.

Q: And where was he born?

Bradwell: He was born in Georgia.

Q: Also in Calvin County?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: What about your mother?

Bradwell: My mother was born in Georgia.

Q: And her name?

Bradwell: Her name is Adele Bonner. Raleigh was her maiden name.

Q: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Bradwell: There were five of us.

Q: Can you give us their names in their birth order?

Bradwell: Daniel Collins, December. I believe.

Q: Oh you don't have to give us the. But that's nice if you know it, but. Okay.

Bradwell: And Ethyl Lee Collins, January, and I'm not sure the years. But three years later. And Eli Collins, born in July of 1917. I know that one. And I was next. And the youngest Claire, Claire Bell Collins, born in 1928.

Q: Okay. And were they all born in Georgia?

Bradwell: They were all born in Georgia.

Q: And what was your father's occupation?

Bradwell: My father's occupation was railroading. Section hand.

Q: Okay. And how about your mother?

Bradwell: Housewife.

Q: You've never changed your name, well, I know that you've never changed your name for any religious reason. Were there any members of the family that ever changed their names? I don't mean because of marriage but I mean that took on an attribute like maybe because of religion or their faith or membership in any particular political organization?

Bradwell: No.

Q: Okay. We'll talk a little bit about your, when you came to Newark. When did you first decide to leave home? And if your route was not directly into Newark, let's just talk about how you got

to Newark. So when did you first decide to leave home?

Bradwell: Well, I left home when I got married. And I moved to another town in Georgia. Went to Athens, Georgia. And from Athens, Georgia, we moved to Buffalo, New York. And from Buffalo, New York, I came into Newark, New Jersey.

Q: How old were you then?

Bradwell: I was eighteen when I came into Newark, New Jersey.

Q: Well, how old were you when you left home?

Bradwell: Not quite seventeen.

Q: Okay. Did you plan your trip in advance?

Bradwell: No. Circumstances.

Q: Okay. And why did you and your husband want to leave Calvin County?

Bradwell: Well, Calvin County was more or less a farming town. Of course, there was a sawmill, but at that time the work there was limited. And we were looking for something better, something more secure.

Q: So what kind of preparations did you make to leave? You know, can you describe a little bit about what you did in preparations to move away from, well, I happen to know that it's Edison, Georgia, in Calvin County?

Bradwell: There really was little preparation made. I think when I got married both of us were

young. And my husband started working with a traveling salesman. And he was driving for him and he decided that he wanted to follow him out of Georgia. And that's how we wound up in Buffalo. But once in Buffalo, he started working at a service garage.

Q: Okay. What time of the year was it when you first left?

Bradwell: It was in the spring of the year.

Q: Okay.

Bradwell: When I left. He left before I did. He left a couple months, three months ahead.

Q: So how did you travel?

Bradwell: I traveled by bus. Naturally, he drove.

Q: Okay. Oh, so you guys had a car.

Bradwell: No. He was working with a traveling salesman.

Q: Oh, okay. You drove his car. Okay. Now how did you come to Newark? I mean, you went to Buffalo, you and your husband went to Buffalo. But how did come to Newark? Did you come to Newark together?

Bradwell: Well, yes. I came from Buffalo into Newark to visit my brother. And I was thinking about relocating. And at that time, he came along with me. But then he returned to Buffalo, and then he came back into New Jersey some months later.

Q: Okay. So you had family in Newark --

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: -- when you came in here from Buffalo. Did you have many family members here or was it just one person, was it, and who was it?

Bradwell: I had a brother here which was the closest relative. But I had aunts and uncles and cousins. All my mother's family migrated from Georgia after the First World War. She was the only one that remained in the south.

Q: Okay. And they all migrated to Newark?

Bradwell: Yes. They did.

Q: So that's how you knew about Newark. They told you about Newark before you came here?

Bradwell: Well, I made my first trip into Newark when I was about eight years old.

Q: Okay. So you visited.

Bradwell: My mother visited Newark when me and my younger sister were quite young. So we and we went back after that two week visit. And me and my younger sister returned the summer we were thirteen and fourteen. And we stayed a year. And we had planned to stay, but my mother came and we went back to Georgia where we finished our education, high school education.

Q: Okay. What impression did you have of Newark when you came as a youngster?

Bradwell: Well, naturally, it was very exciting because with all the tall buildings and the transportation and the everything we wasn't used to seeing in Georgia. So it was a very exciting

place when you first came into Newark.

Q: Do you remember what street you were on? What street you stayed on?

Bradwell: Yes. Court Street.

Q: And who were you staying with?

Bradwell: My uncle. My mother's brother.

Q: So when you first left Georgia, who made the travel arrangements for you? When you, you took the bus out of Georgia right?

Bradwell: Yes. I did.

Q: Who made the travel arrangements?

Bradwell: My father.

Q: You remember how much a bus ticket cost?

Bradwell: I think it, what was it, twenty-some dollars? Seems like twenty-seven, thirty, it was less than fifty dollars.

Q: And that was into Buffalo?

Bradwell: That was into Buffalo.

Q: Do you happen to know anybody that traveled into Newark by boat or anybody that ever

traveled by boat?

Bradwell: No.

Q: Okay. Pretty much everybody that you knew traveled how?

Bradwell: Traveled by railroad, by bus, or private car.

Q: So what was your trip like when you left home?

Bradwell: It was exciting. Tiresome too, I found out. Because at that time, you had to prepare your own food because there was so many places that we wasn't allowed to eat. You know, like in the restaurants and things like that. So we usually wound up packing a lunch when we left to travel.

Q: What did you pack a lunch in? I mean, how did you pack it? There was no aluminum foil was there?

Bradwell: No. Mostly shoe boxes and there was some wax paper around. Either we would use the paper from the bread, the white bread, which was plastic.

Q: Okay. So when you came. I'm gonna ask you two different things. When you went from Georgia to Buffalo, do you remember the route that you took? And then when you left Buffalo coming to Newark, do you remember the route that the bus took? Did you travel by bus when you left Buffalo coming into Newark as well?

Bradwell: Yes, I did. The route from Georgia was through Atlanta, Tennessee, and Ohio, Cincinnati and then into Buffalo. And from Buffalo into New Jersey, it was just a matter of coming into Pennsylvania and then to Jersey.



Q: What were the conditions like?

Bradwell: On the bus?

Q: Yeah. Traveling from the south and crossing that Mason-Dixon Line.

Bradwell: Well, traveling from the south, naturally, we rode in the back of the bus until we reached Washington. And then after that we could sit anyplace in the bus. But to a certain extent, there were some people that would stand if they didn't want to wait for another bus if it was crowded, but usually everybody had a seat.

Q: So when you say some people, are you just talking about the African-Americans on the bus, or would white folks be standing too?

Bradwell: Yes. There were times with short trips because in those years, in those years when the migration first started like in the 40s and the 50s, a whole lot of people were traveling by bus. And there were short trips between towns over the south that no train went through. So a lot of people rode the bus a short distance and they would stand.

Q: Do you remember how much money did you have with you when you were traveling? When you first left home, which was when you were first starting out, and then compared to when you were a little bit older and when you left Buffalo and came to Newark.

Bradwell: It's funny, but I pretty sure I had less than twenty-five dollars.

Q: Was that just traveling money, or was that all the money?

Bradwell: That was the money. Because we were going to relatives. Or like I was going to my husband. So naturally that was all the money.

Q: Okay. Do you have a particular story or anything that you can remember, a funny story, an anecdote of something that happened while you were traveling?

Bradwell: Not really. I can't remember one if there was.

Q: Okay. You talked a little about how the bus was segregated. But what would happen when the bus would make stops?

Bradwell: When the bus would make stops, everybody would get off the bus cause there was different rest rooms for the white and the colored. And different lunch counters. We could go to the side. They had side windows that you could order a sandwich or food, but you couldn't go in and sit down in the restaurant to eat it. And most times we would get a sandwich or whatever we bought, we would take it back on the bus and eat.

Q: The places that you stopped. Those types of places where they had a side window and where they had separate services, was it clean?

Bradwell: To a certain extent. There hired people there to make sure that the bus customers was served. So I guess the buslines made sure that we could get into the bathroom and get food because we were traveling through. To a certain extent it was, you know, not, it could have been better, but it was tolerable.

Q: Could you, did they have like a variety of food that you could get? Or like what kinds of stuff was available? Or did you even buy food because you had taken a box lunch?

Bradwell: Sometime we would buy food. Sometime we would just buy something to drink. But we could buy anything that they had on the menu. We just couldn't go down and sit down and eat it.

Q: Okay. What kind of food did you have in your box?

Bradwell: Mostly fried chicken. And maybe sometimes boiled eggs. But chicken and pound cake was the thing.

Q: I was gonna ask you, no pound cake?

Bradwell: Yeah, pound cake and fried chicken. It was durable.

Q: Did your box end up greasy?

Bradwell: Well, you know, come to think of it, not too greasy. But there was some that it would come through. And there were some people used little baskets that they would put it in.

Q: Now, when you would travel by car? How were the facilities. When you had to stop for gas, what would you encounter?

Bradwell: Usually when we traveled by car, it was the same thing. Cause the people in the gas stations along the highway usually knew you were traveling through. And they seemed they would serve you fast to get you moving out of the vicinity. That what it seemed like. So you never had to wait for service. There wasn't always a place where you could use the bathroom.

Q: How did you manage that?

Bradwell: Well, there's always the side of the road. [Laughter] At night.

Q: Well, what about when you had, you know, when you traveled overnight? Did you just travel all night? Did you stop? Were you able to stop anywhere?

Bradwell: The only places you could stop, you would have to go into the city and find a rooming house that catered to the colored or the Negro or whatever. But mostly we drove through. You usually didn't travel south driving with one driver. If you stopped, you stopped along the highways for rest and something like that. But you usually slept in the car.

Q: So about how many drivers did you have in a car?

Bradwell: No more than two.

Q: Oh, okay. And you guys would just drive all night, just switching off.

Bradwell: Yes. And sometimes you'd just stop and take a rest. But you keep moving.

Q: So what happened when you got to Newark, when you came from Buffalo, what happened when you got to Newark? Did anyone meet you? You know, so when you got off the bus, what happened?

Bradwell: My brother was there to meet me. And naturally I went home with him. And I stayed with him until we found a furnished room.

Q: This is you and your first husband.

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: What kind of stuff did you bring with you?

Bradwell: Just my clothing. Because we didn't have any furniture. Because we only lived in rooming houses since we'd been married.

Q: So what was your luggage like or did you have luggage? What did you have your clothes in?

Bradwell: We had luggage. But it wasn't the best of luggage. And then you always had a shopping bag packed and boxes. But we had mostly one piece of luggage. And nothing fancy.

Q: Did the catch work?

Bradwell: Sometimes. But most times it was a rope tied around it. [Laughter]

Q: Were you able to bring anything, or did you have to ship anything? Were you able to bring everything or did you have to ship anything?

Bradwell: No. Actually some of my clothes.

Q: But it was just all clothing? What about?

Bradwell: Linens. You had some bed linens. But usually when you were living in rooming houses, they furnished the linens.

Q: What about pots and pans?

Bradwell: We didn't accumulate any until you got your apartment. But when you're living in rooming houses, all that's there.

Q: Did you ever plan to return to the south?

Bradwell: I thought about it, but not in the beginning of the first year that when I left.

Q: What made you think about going back home?

Bradwell: Well, I didn't really think about returning until after retirement.

Q: Oh, okay. So when you left, when you were a young woman.

Bradwell: I left.

Q: You never thought about going back home.

Bradwell: I never thought about going back to the state.

Q: Well, yes, that's what I meant.

Bradwell: Yeah. I never thought about going to the state.

Q: Do you know anybody who came to Newark about the same time that you did that stayed for a little while and then went back to your home town?

Bradwell: Yes, I did. One was a cousin and another was a friend. They went back and they stayed there.

Q: Do you know why they went back?

Bradwell: They didn't like the city so they went back.

Q: Any particular thing about it? I mean, what about it didn't they like?

Bradwell: I don't really know. I guess it was the fact that they probably missed them family. That they didn't have any immediate family in the area. Only like my cousin, was me, my brothers and sisters. But their parents was there so they decided to go back.

Q: Did you know anybody who would go back and forth? In other words, they would move back south and live there for a little while and then come back north and live here for a little while, and go back and live for a little while. Just back and forth like that. I don't mean like visiting trips, but.

Bradwell: No. I didn't. The only person I knew that did that was my grandmother. But she was family. She migrated to New Jersey after the First World War also. My mother's mother. And she would always come back home and spend the whole winter.

Q: What was her name?

Bradwell: Eugene Weeks Raleigh. And then she would come back in the spring of the year here. But usually around November she was always back in Georgia until the spring.

Q: Was it because of the weather?

Bradwell: I believe it might have been.

Q: Did you ever help anybody leave your hometown or the south and come into Newark?  
Did you ever sponsor anybody?

Bradwell: Well, I helped my sister, my older sister. I provided a place for them to stay until they could find a job and a place to live.

Q: How would you describe the people who left the south around the same time that you did? For instance, about what age were they? Were they single? Were they married? Were they educated, uneducated? Did they have skills? I mean, just any way you want to describe them.

Bradwell: Some had a high school education. Some didn't have any skills, but at that time they would always find work. And most of them were young. Because it seemed that if you stayed



there until you reached a certain age, you didn't leave. But it was mostly the young that were leaving. Some had finished high school, some hadn't finished high school.

Q: Is there one particular characteristic that you think they all had in common? The ones who left.

Bradwell: The ones who left I think were looking more or less for a better life in a way. Not the fact that they wasn't, they didn't have what they needed there, but being young, there were no outlet like for socializing or nightclubs or anything like that. And naturally when the younger people wanted to find something more to do than in a small town, a small rural town.

Q: So how would you describe a better life?

Bradwell: Well, since we got it now, I don't know if there was a better life. But I think we were looking more or less to be on our own, to be able to do what we wanted to do. Rather than being where it just wasn't anything to do. I mean, socially.

Q: Do you have any, any kind of memorabilia? Any kind of souvenirs from your travels? Photographs, tickets.

Bradwell: Yeah. I have photographs. Some ticket stubs, but I don't know if I can even find them now. There's so many that's packed away.

Q: How many times have you been back home? And do you consider the south to be home? Do you refer to it as home?

Bradwell: Yes, I do. I refer to it as home. And from the time I left Georgia, I made a trip back every year, some years twice a year. I went back twice a year until my parents passed. And after that, it was usually once a year. Until recent years, now it's like maybe once every two years or

three years. But, yes, I still consider that home.

Q: When you went regularly, were there particular times during the year, or was it just at random?

Bradwell: No, it was particular times I always spent my vacations at home and Christmas at home.

Q: What month did you take vacation? Did you go the same month every year, in the summer?

Bradwell: Yes, July.

Q: July. Around the fourth.

Bradwell: Around the fourth.

Q: So was that, were a lot of people coming home around that same time?

Bradwell: Yes. There were. There was always a lot of people coming in from different places, when it was like a reunion in a way. Cause we always see a lot of people during July and Christmastime cause they went home.

Q: Did you ever think about staying on those times when you went home for vacation?

Bradwell: No. [Laughter]

Q: Okay. We talked a little bit about the first place that you stayed when you came to Newark. You stayed with your brother. Was that your oldest brother?

Bradwell: My oldest brother.

Q: Okay. That was Danny, Daniel. And you remember what street that was?

Bradwell: He lived in [?] at that time.

Q: And how long did that you stay that with him?

Bradwell: A whole month.

Q: Oh. Okay. And what was your first impression of where Uncle Danny lived?

Bradwell: Well, it was different because I had to.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

Q: This is an interview with Willie Bradwell. This is tape one, side two. And we were talking, I think I just asked you what a railroad flat was.

Bradwell: A railroad was an apartment that was where all the rooms were just straight through. And they called em railroad flats because you could sit in the kitchen and look straight into the living room, or the living room and look straight in the kitchen, and the bathrooms were usually on a little back porch.

Q: Okay. And I was asking you what was your first impression when you were telling me you had to get used to railroad flats.

Bradwell: Yeah, and aside from that, the fact that I could probably walk a couple of doors from where I lived and there would be a store to buy whatever I wanted up on the Avenue. Another couple of, half a block or so, you could buy whatever you needed in clothing line or whatever. You didn't have to go downtown for that. It was more like neighborhoods.

Q: So what streets were you shopping on?

Bradwell: Spruce Street, Springfield Avenue, Prince Street.

Q: Okay. So tell me about your first apartment.

Bradwell: My first apartment was an apartment on Camden Street. I'm not sure of the number now, but I think it was 157.

Q: What streets were you near?

Bradwell: Near Bargain Street and South Orange Avenue.

Q: So what was your impression of your first apartment? Now was this an apartment now or was this another rooming house?

Bradwell: No, this was the first apartment away from the rooming house where we had to get some furniture. And that was on Camden Street. My uncle had got this apartment for us from a fellow that was a friend of his. And that was wonderful. And I guess it was three rooms, and that was really a step up from the rooming house. We had to share the kitchen with all the other roomers.

Q: Remember what your rent was?

Bradwell: You know, I really don't. I really don't remember what the rent was.

Q: Were you in an apartment building? How many families?

Bradwell: It was a two-family house.

Q: What floor were you on?

Bradwell: First floor.

Q: What was your neighborhood like?

Bradwell: The neighborhood then was nice. We were right around the corner from the stores. And mostly one and two-family houses was in that area, that block at the time. And it was nice.

Q: Were most people renting there? Were the landlords living there at the time?

Bradwell: Some landlords. Mostly it was landlord and a tenant at that time. And the people that owned the homes were living in them.

Q: Were you living in a multi-racial neighborhood or was it all black?

Bradwell: It was mostly black. It might have been, there were one or two white families in the neighborhood, but it's mostly all black.

Q: Do you happen to know what their ethnic background was?

Bradwell: No, I don't.

Q: It's not important. Okay, so pretty much you settled in that neighborhood because your uncle helped you get that place.

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: Okay. So where did you move from there?

Bradwell: When I left Camden Street?

Q: Yes.

Bradwell: I think we moved to Ridged Avenue in a superintendent apartment at, is that 185 Ridged Avenue or West, or in that area.

Q: So you said you were you were in the superintendent's apartment?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: So you were the superintendents for that then?

Bradwell: Yeah. We were the superintendent there.

Q: What was that like?

Bradwell: It was all right. It was different. Even though my husband was still working out, he took care of the furniture and all, and I did the hallways and things like that. And we had a three-room apartment there, basement apartment there, which was nice. Of course, all the tenants at that time were Jewish.

Q: In that building?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: So were there children in that building?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: Okay. Was your son, was Kenneth with you?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: So how did he get along with the neighborhood children?

Bradwell: They got along good. Of course, there were certain little games that they played that they didn't realize a lot of times. Like cowboys and Indians, they'd always want to hang him. [Laughter] But.

Q: Well, how did you handle that?

Bradwell: Well, believe it or not, I didn't have to handle it because their parents did. They stopped them and insisted on everybody taking turns. That's one thing I was. Even that was the first, that's where he started school from that area, the Bergen Street School. And at that time he was practically the only black kid in Bergen Street School. But nobody said a word about it, and no outcry was made, and there was never any mention of it.

Q: What was his experience like in school?

Bradwell: I think he got along with the kids well. I thought there was more of the kids that he played with there in the neighborhood.

Q: Yeah. Well, we know he went on to get his master's. But what was his educational experience like? Was it mostly a white school at that time? Bergen Street.

Bradwell: Bergen Street School, yes.

Q: What was his, what was it like having him educated there with the homework and stuff like



that?

Bradwell: But he didn't, he was only there for two years, and he didn't graduate from there.

Q: Okay. Where did he go after that?

Bradwell: Eighteenth Avenue. Because we moved from that apartment on Ridgewood Avenue but back near Avon.

Q: Okay, well, we might talk a little bit more about that later. But why did you move into this apartment building? Was it to take the position?

Bradwell: Of the superintendent? Yes. At that time, my husband wasn't working and this job came through and somebody got it for him. So we moved in there. But then afterwards, we were there for about two years, and then he went back to working full time and we gave it up.

Q: Were there other black families in that neighborhood?

Bradwell: At that time, no.

Q: Well, what was it like for you living there?

Bradwell: It wasn't a problem. Because when, the people in the building were friendly enough. And when I left the building and went back to my brother's, back into our neighborhood, and I went visiting.

Q: What about when you shopped? When you went grocery shopping?

Bradwell: When I went grocery shopping at that time I would go back into the ethnic communities

because the type of food that I wanted I couldn't find in that neighborhood. But I went back more or less to Spruce Street where I could find the type of food that I was used to.

Q: Soul food.

Bradwell: Soul food, yeah. Collard greens and I'd more at that time.

Q: So and what street was this now?

Bradwell: It was Ridgewood Avenue, but near [?].

Q: Okay. So where did you go next?

Bradwell: Ridgewood Avenue, but the other end down near Avon Avenue. We got an apartment at 15 Ridgewood Avenue.

Q: Was that racially mixed as well, that end of Ridgewood Avenue?

Bradwell: Mostly blacks.

Q: Where was kind of the demarcation line at on Ridgewood Avenue during that time?

Bradwell: Clinton Avenue. Didn't hardly find any blacks past Clinton Avenue at that time. Nelson Avenue by the courts there was.

Q: And why did you move to 15 Ridgewood?

Bradwell: Because that's where we found the apartment.

Q: And so this is still with your first husband?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: Okay. And then where did you move after that? Where did you live?

Bradwell: After that we separated when we were on 15 Ridgewood Avenue.

Q: Who kept the apartment?

Bradwell: He kept it and I moved in with my aunt on 14th Street and over past Clinton Avenue.

Q: What was her name?

Bradwell: Ardell Wynn.

Q: Okay. So how long did you stay over there?

Bradwell: I stayed over there about six months.

Q: And then what?

Bradwell: Then I got married. And I moved Badger Avenue.

Q: Badger near where?

Bradwell: Near Avon Avenue. I can't get away from Avon Avenue.

Q: So what was that neighborhood like?

Bradwell: Well, that neighborhood was more commercial than it was residence. Because there were coal yards in that neighborhood, and there wasn't too many dwellings there. But the neighborhood was.

Q: You remember the name of the coal yards?

Bradwell: You know, I really don't remember. It was a [words drowned out by motor noised] had been there for years, but I don't remember the name of it. And then Hughes opened a smaller coal yard on that same street.

Q: He was black.

Bradwell: He was black.

Q: Were the other coal yards black owned?

Bradwell: No. It was a large outfit. I don't remember the name.

Q: Was your neighborhood pretty much all black or was it mixed?

Bradwell: All blacks. There was a few whites in there, but they soon moved out after we moved in.

Q: Okay. So you want to tell me a little bit more about. Well, let me ask you, what was the shopping like there? Did you still have to go over to Prince Street to get the food that you wanted?

Bradwell: When I first moved into Badger Avenue, yes.

Q: How long did you live there?

Bradwell: Oh quite a while. A number of years I lived on Badger Avenue. About fifteen years.

Q: So you remember when collard greens came to Clinton Avenue.

Bradwell: Yeah. Soon after I moved to Badger Avenue, then a few months later they were there.

Q: What were the merchants like in the neighborhood? Who owned the stores?

Bradwell: The Jews mostly. They were all right. They would give you credit if you needed it. And we didn't have a problem with them, and then a few blacks started owning stores too. There wasn't too many stores in that area. Well, there was a candy store on the corner of Ridgewood and Madison that eventually was black owned.

Q: Do you remember their name?

Bradwell: Reed. But I don't remember the name of the people that had it before they bought it.

Q: So did the fact that you got credit, did that determine what stores you shopped in?

Bradwell: No. Because I never bought food on credit. I never ran a credit for food. But I do know that some people in the neighborhood did. They didn't do all their shopping there, but I guess there were certain things that they, times when your money ran short, they would let you have whatever you needed.

Q: The white shopkeepers, did they employ anybody in their stores?

Bradwell: Yes. They usually had somebody from the neighborhood working in the store.

Q: Were they mostly family run or did they?

Bradwell: They were mostly family run. There was a supermarket on Clinton Avenue, up at Clinton Avenue, there was a supermarket.

Q: Did you ever notice any resentment from the people who lived in the neighborhood towards any of the merchants, shopkeepers?

Bradwell: Not really.

Q: Did the shop owners live in the neighborhood?

Bradwell: No. Even the black one didn't.

Q: I'm gonna ask you a few questions about how your experiences in the south compared to your experience in the north about certain things. Like, how about eating habits. You talked a little bit, you know, how you had to go back over to Prince Street to buy certain food. Could you buy, were there any things that you were used to having or eating in the south that you couldn't get, even around Prince Street?

Bradwell: No.

Q: When do you, could you always get what you wanted on Prince Street, even from when you first moved in, came into Newark? You always remember being able to buy what you wanted?

Bradwell: Yes. Practically in that area you could always find the foods, the type of foods that you wanted.

Q: I have a question. How much was a pound of greens then?

Bradwell: Oh, you usually got three pounds for a quarter.

Q: Oh. You're lucky now if you get three pounds for a dollar. What was the difference in the way people dressed here and when you were at home?

Bradwell: Not too much difference. Not too much difference. Because most of the people at home, or back in the south, used to order their clothing like from Sears & Roebuck, Chicago mail order company, and that was the same style and things that they were used to wearing. Or either they would make their clothing. So it wasn't too much difference in the style of the place.

Q: Did you have any extended family when you were in Newark? Did you have people that you just kind of called aunt or uncle or?

Bradwell: Well, I had so many aunts and uncles, all of them, there wasn't anybody. There was one family I considered extended family, but that was after my daughter was born. And their son became my babysitter. And it's like becoming part of another family.

Q: That was on Ridgewood Avenue?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: And you were living on Badger. So how about how friends and family helped you? Was there any difference from when you were home as opposed to when you were in Newark? Did people kind of act the same way or were they different?

Bradwell: Well, people started changing after they were in the city for a while. But they would still help you if you went to them for help. They'll extend a hand to you if they knew you from the respect that you were from their hometown.

Q: What kind of changes did people start to go through?



Bradwell: Well, I don't know the changes, but you couldn't always depend on them for that hand if you needed it. You know. As you could when you were living in the south.

Q: Why do you think that was?

Bradwell: I don't know unless it was change in the person, how the person, you know, the big city. Either that or considered constantly. I don't know.

Q: What about celebrations? For instance, weddings or, I know, funeral's not necessarily a celebration, but an observance. But, you know, weddings, births, you know, funerals. Were they different? And if so, how?

Bradwell: Well, I can't see where they were any different. I really can't. The difference is weddings, if you invited, you go. And funerals, if you know the person, you usually show up. And it's still the same way, it was always that way.

Q: You know, one of the things that I remember when I was a kid is when I had a birthday party everybody came Grownups, children, family. And everybody got dressed up and came. Was it like that in the south?

Bradwell: In the south, we didn't celebrate birthdays per se. Like, they, you know, have a party every birthday. So that part was different. After we migrated here, then we started celebrating birthdays every year. But at home we didn't. If your birthday came, you probably, somebody would bake a cake. You'd have a cake for dinner or something. But other than that, there wasn't presents or things like that.

Q: It was pretty much just an observance by the family.

Bradwell: Yeah.

Q: Even for small children?

Bradwell: For small children, even so, yes.

Q: What about holidays like Christmas and Easter?

Bradwell: Well Christmas was always a big day. It was always family cause everybody went home. What they call home was right where mama lived. And you visit everybody in the neighborhood on that day. You would go from house to house and would eat with everybody. It was kind of like an open city. Not say, open house, but everybody prepared food, and everybody was welcome, and everybody wanted you to come in and have something with them, and they did the same thing.

Q: Well, what about in Newark? When the occasions when you did not, the Christmases when you did not go back home.

Bradwell: It was even that way among the people that you knew even in Newark. It was from house to house. And everybody gonna stop by. And we gonna stop by. We used to celebrate a whole week, not one day. We celebrate the week between Christmas and New Year.

Q: Really. It's kind of like Kwanza now. What about alcohol and drugs, you know, tobacco?

Bradwell: Well, the kids started. There wasn't any drugs per se, but tobacco. Kids started trying to smoke and chewing tobacco and different snuffs when they were quite young and they weren't supposed to. And the boys would start drinking early. They'd sneak it. Some of the girls would try. But I guess it's the same as now. Only you got the drugs and everything that they started with. The kids always, we was always trying to smoke, lighting up a cigarette if we didn't get caught with it. But we couldn't go and buy them like you could here because the people in the stores wouldn't sell them to you.

Q: Really.

Bradwell: No. Because everybody knew everybody else.

Q: What about in Newark?

Bradwell: Well, when we got to Newark, we was considered grown. But some people drank and some didn't. Some smoked and some didn't.

Q: What about starch and clay and dirt? Did you know anybody that ate starch?

Bradwell: Yes. A lot of people used to eat starch. And some people used to eat clay. I could never see why, but I guess there was added to it, something you could do without. And starch, a lot of people eat starch.

Q: Did you know a lot of people in Newark who? Well, I can remember people eating starch. But say for instance, did you know anybody who might have eaten clay or dirt. Cause I know Georgia's famous for that red Georgia clay.

Bradwell: But they didn't eat the red clay.

Q: Well, what was the clay?

Bradwell: The clay, there's a clay that comes in a white, and it's only found in certain places. And they would dig that. It's like a starch, and it's white. You don't eat that red clay.

Q: Okay. Did you know anybody that ate dirt?

Bradwell: No. I didn't.

Q: What about medical practices?

Bradwell: At home they used to use a lot of herbs and things that they got out of the woods. Say roots and things. But they went to the doctor. But I don't know what they were. Everybody did he was on his own, certain people that knew what herbs and things you could use. And those people you could get certain things from. But everybody didn't use it cause you had to know what you were getting. You couldn't get to go out and dig up any kind of roots. Certain things they needed.

Q: So these people who had this knowledge, did they have like a place of honor in the community?

Bradwell: No. It was just older people that knew that certain roots and things like that.

Q: Did a lot of people go to them for different ailments or rashes?

Bradwell: No it wasn't like that. If they, somebody was suffering with, say diarrhea or something like that, they would tell you what kind of root it was, and they would go get it for you. And that was it. It wasn't like they was running a place that people was just going to them instead of the doctor. Nothing like that.

Q: So what about in Newark? Did you know of anybody who had this knowledge when they were in Newark?

Bradwell: No.

Q: So you kind of depended on?

Bradwell: Doctors.

Q: Doctors and over the counter medications. I remember you telling an interesting story about when you were a kid and you cut your foot open.

Bradwell: Yeah I cut my foot. But my mother didn't take me to the doctor. She just soaked my foot in cold water and then she covered it with [?] and wrapped it up. And that was all. I never had stitches or anything.

Q: And it healed.

Bradwell: It healed.

Q: What about, did you know anybody who believed in whodo and voodoo and fixin people and?

Bradwell: Not really.

Q: And conjuring and wimps?

Bradwell: Not really.

Q: At home? In Newark?

Bradwell: No. There used to be people that come through the town supposedly do everything. But they would never stop at our house because we didn't believe in that stuff.

Q: What about pets?

Bradwell: We had a dog, cats. And I had pet chickens at one time. A pet chicken. That my grand, my father's mother gave me a chick and let me raise it. Until it was grown.

Q: Then what happened?

Bradwell: They would put it out in the rest of the yards with the rest of the chickens. Cause it would sit at the head of the bed every night.

Q: What was, was there any crime when you were home, when you were in the south? What was crime like? What was considered to be crime and juvenile delinquency?

Bradwell: Well, there was no, as far as I know, there was no juvenile delinquency. You had people that were. But there really wasn't that much crime. Or somebody would get in a fight, and occasionally there was a murder, you know, somebody got killed after a drunken brawl or something like that. But there wasn't any crime. But nobody locked their doors when I was growing up there. And if you wanted something from somebody's house and they wasn't home, you just go in there and get it, and you'd tell em later, you know, if you borrowed something, you'd put it back, give it back to them. But there really wasn't too much crime. The kids, what we call the bad kids, was somebody that would throw rocks at somebody. So that's the way it went.

Q: So how did that compare to crime and juvenile delinquency in Newark?

Bradwell: Well, when I first came into Newark, the juvenile crime didn't seem to be that bad. If it was, I wasn't paying any attention to it. Cause I remember when they first started snatching people's bags. But there wasn't too much of a crime problem that I could see like with juveniles and things that like when I first came into Newark. Cause people walked the streets at any time of night, anything, nobody bothered you.

Q: Did you leave your doors unlocked when you were in Newark?

Bradwell: Well, you didn't, you know, you'd lock your doors. But, you didn't have to, not the way you have to be careful with them now.

Q: When did, can you give an approximate time or year when you started to notice the change?

Bradwell: In the sixties really.

Q: That's quite a while from the time that you got here until things got.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

Q: This is tape two, side a. I think I'm just gonna move on now. Did you find that, what was your perception of blacks helping other blacks in Newark?

Bradwell: I don't. There were certain organizations that you could go to for help. There was the Urban League. That's the one that I know. And through the churches, they were always there to also help.

Q: How did that compare to when you were in the south of blacks helping other blacks?

Bradwell: Well, in the south I think it was a little different because there blacks were a little more together because they only had each other to depend on. And they know that they could depend on each other. So they stuck a little closer together. And then when they came north. Because they had to in the south.

Q: I have one more comparison question for you and that's about race relations. What's your overall impression with the relations between blacks and whites in the north and blacks and whites in the south? Particularly blacks and whites in Newark.

Bradwell: The difference?

Q: Between blacks and whites, the relationship between the two races in Newark and the two

races in your hometown?

Bradwell: In my hometown, the relationship between the black and the whites there considering, aside from the segregation, there wasn't too much of a problem in that little town. Because the whites didn't attempt to keep you from owning or having whatever you worked for or you could acquire as long as you wasn't in their space and they consider it or something like that. But they would help you to own your own home or to help you to have whatever you had as long as you didn't attempt to, say, mix with them. Whereas I found that in the north, they wouldn't give you the help or they don't give you help to have something of your own, even though they don't seem to want you to be a part of theirs. So that is one difference. But coming from a small town, I guess that makes a lot of difference too. Because like everybody knew everybody. And like I said before, they didn't attempt to try to prevent you from owning or having whatever.

Q: Okay. What kind of major customs and traditions from the south do you recall survived in Newark? For instance, let's just use cookouts or barbecues as an example.

Bradwell: Well, they had those in the south, and they have them here. So I guess that's just a holdover. Because there were a lot of people that migrated from the south, and a lot of the customs that they kept on.

Q: Can you recall any of them?

Bradwell: What, like the barbecues? In the south or here?

Q: That started in the south that people continue to do while they were here. That they brought with them. And if you can't, that's okay.

Bradwell: I can't recall any specific like that now.



Q: Are there any particular things that you did in the south that you continued to do when you came north? I mean, I know that you didn't fish. But, you know.

Bradwell: And I don't fish now. I don't think.

Q: Did you have a garden or anything like that?

Bradwell: We had a garden, yes. We grew a lot of our food.

Q: Did you continue that when you were here?

Bradwell: If there was space. If we were living in a place where I had a little space, I would plant some tomatoes or squash or something like that. But we never had, in the city, there was never enough space that you could really have a garden. Like now they got a lot of vacant spaces where they have the community garden. But when I first came to Newark, there wasn't space like that.

Q: There were houses there, right?

Bradwell: Yeah, houses there, yeah.

Q: How were you treated by folks who lived in Newark who were either raised in Newark or in the north or people who lived here a long time? When you came to Newark, how were you treated by those folks?

Bradwell: Well, when I first came into Newark, most of the people that I came in contact with were relatives or friends of relatives, and you were treated all right. Occasionally you ran across a person or persons that gave you the impression that if you grew up in the south, you wasn't educated or there's a whole lot of things you didn't know. You didn't know how to do this, and you wasn't used to that, and that kind of thing. But usually when you first come up, you're only

coming in contact with your relatives and friends of your relatives. And they wasn't going out of their way to try to make you feel bad or whatever. But I didn't come into contact with a lot of that when I first came into New Jersey.

Q: When Kenneth, did Kenneth start school in Georgia, or did he start school in Newark?

Bradwell: He started school in Newark.

Q: Okay. Cause I was gonna ask you if you had to go through him being put back because he came up from the south.

Bradwell: No. Remember I told you, he went to Bergen Street School.

Q: That's right. Okay.

Bradwell: No. He started school here.

Q: Do you know of any part of Newark where there were clusters of people from a particular town or from your own hometown? It was almost like another little hometown.

Bradwell: No. I don't.

Q: Okay. Okay, let's talk a little bit about your work experience. What kind of work did you do in the south before you came to Newark?

Bradwell: I worked in the fields picking cotton and picking peanuts. I didn't do too much work in private homes.

Q: So we're talking about your minor years now.

Bradwell: Yeah.

Q: Did you get paid?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: Were you allowed to keep your money?

Bradwell: Part of it. We had allowance. I think we got, was it twenty-five cents a week. Something like that.

Q: What could you do with twenty-five cents a week?

Bradwell: You could buy some candy or maybe a Coca-Cola. Something like that.

Q: How much did you make?

Bradwell: Well, we wasn't making that much because if you were picking peanuts you were making like seventy-five cents a day. And we really wasn't making that much money.

Q: Right. And out of that you got twenty-five cents a week or twenty-five cents a day.

Bradwell: A week.

Q: Okay. What was your first job in Newark?

Bradwell: My first job in Newark was, was it housework. Yeah, I think that was it.

Q: And how did you come across doing that? How did you find out about that? How did you get

that job?

Bradwell: I think I went to employment agency and they sent me out for. But I only did a few times.

Q: Did you, were you working, did you work in a home in Newark? Or were you in another community, did you work in another community?

Bradwell: I worked in a home in Newark, in the Wheaton section. And really one on Springfield Avenue. And then I got a job in a factory.

Q: And where was that at? Well, before you go into the factory, what did you think of the days work? What was your experience like?

Bradwell: I hated it. Cause I don't like housework, not even my own.

Q: How were you treated?

Bradwell: In one place I was treated fine. In another place, you worked for so much a day and your lunch. And this person insisted on me finishing all of the work before I had my lunch. So when I had my lunch it was time to come home, and I didn't go back.

Q: Okay Now you were going to go on to the job that you got in the factory. That was your next job?

Bradwell: Yes, I had a job in a factory.

Q: What factory?

Bradwell: Making paper cups at North Newark. I was working there.

Q: Remember how much you made?

Bradwell: Fifty-five cents an hour.

Q: And how much did you make as a domestic?

Bradwell: Oh, I think at that time it was something like three or four dollars a day.

Q: Okay. So what major adjustments did you have to make when you went into the factory?  
Was it, were you mentally prepared for it?

Bradwell: Oh yeah, I was looking for work, and I got the job, and that was for day work. But I, it wasn't bad, it wasn't hard. It was just a matter of, I was working on a line, cause I was stacking the paper cups as they came off the conveyer belt. And I worked there for about a few months. And then I got the job at H.A. Wilson, which later was bought out by Engelahrtdt.

Q: And when you worked in Newark, how did you get to work?

Bradwell: By bus.

Q: How long did it take you to get to work?

Bradwell: Oh, about twenty-five minutes.

Q: Do you remember what bus line?

Bradwell: The thirteenth.

Q: So what were your conditions like in the factories that you worked in? Like your wages, you know, what kind of hours?

Bradwell: I worked eight hours. And like I said, the wages, that was minimum wage at that time.

Q: Fifty-five cents an hour?

Bradwell: Yeah. Minimum wage.

Q: Were there benefits then?

Bradwell: I didn't have any benefits there because there wasn't a union. But when I went to the H. A. Wilson, there wasn't a union there either at the time, but one came in a few months after I started working there, and then we had benefits.

Q: What was the racial background, let's say, when you worked at H.A. Wilson?

Bradwell: About one fourth black, three-fourths white.

Q: What about at the paper cup company?

Bradwell: About the same.

Q: Where was H.A. Wilson, is it H.A. Wilson?

Bradwell: H.A. Wilson.

Q: Yeah. Where was that?

Bradwell: They were located down on Chestnut Street.

Q: Took the bus there too?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: And what bus line did you take there?

Bradwell: The number 3 which isn't running no more.

Q: Yeah. So how long did it take you to get to work down there?

Bradwell: About twenty-five minutes.

Q: Did you ever pick up any other languages of people that you worked with?

Bradwell: No.

Q: How were you treated by your supervisor?

Bradwell: No problems. We had a very nice supervisor when I first went there, and he used to like to talk to me when he found out that I came from down south. He was always trying to find out just what it was like living down south. But otherwise was no problem with it.

Q: Was her German-American or was he from Germany?

Bradwell: I really don't know if he was from Germany originally, but I know he was German.

Q: Was the work equitable? Were there certain jobs that were held for certain people or?

Bradwell: No, the work was pretty well integrated when I went to work at H.A. Wilson. But H.A. Wilson was a small company that, they're from Purchase Mill, and they didn't even hire black people till after the War. So when we went in there after the War, it wasn't too much of a problem.

Q: About what year did you go in there?

Bradwell: I started working for them in 19, what year was the War over?

Q: 45, 46.

Bradwell: 45. I guess I worked for them in 46, I can't remember. End of 45 or 46.

Q: Okay. So you said the union came in shortly after you started.

Bradwell: After I started.

Q: Did you join?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: Was it a closed shop did you?

Bradwell: Everybody had to join. And we got a raise from fifty-five cents an hour to seventy-five cents. I figure it was worth it. And we got benefits.

Q: Okay. What kind of benefits did you have?

Bradwell: Well, insurance and, what else. We didn't have, did we have any hospitalization?



There might have been. I don't really remember now. I do know we had an insurance policy, and, you know, then we have vacation pay and we got a Christmas bonus. And then they put the job on an incentive where you could make bonuses over your hourly rate.

Q: Did you not get paid vacation before the union came in?

Bradwell: No. No. They didn't pay you vacation time.

Q: Oh, that's interesting. Because my whole work experience, you know, that's always been, you know, part of.

Bradwell: A lot of the things, we had vacation pay. And then they took the seniority system in the other area. And, you know, then they said that five years they're going to.

Q: Were you active in the union?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: How so, you know, how?

Bradwell: I served on committees, and then I served shop steward for three or four years.

Q: Did you ever have to go up against management?

Bradwell: A couple of times.

Q: What was that like?

Bradwell: Well, it was for several reasons. It went through steps. And the shop steward that was

the first step. And if you couldn't settle it there, it went to the street steward, and the next step of management. It might be on the group of foreman. And if you couldn't settle it there, it went to the chief steward, and the next step in management.

Q: So what was your experience like? Did you pretty much get things settled at your level?

Bradwell: Yeah. Most times we did.

Q: Took no prisoners, huh?

Bradwell: No. But then Engelhardt had bought H.A. Wilson out and they built a plant in Union out on Route 22, and they relocated us from Newark to Union.

Q: So how did you get to work when they moved to Union?

Bradwell: By bus.

Q: And what bus did you take?

Bradwell: The 140, the Somerset Line. It ran, at that time it ran along Route 76.

Q: Where were you living then in Newark?

Bradwell: I was living on Badger Avenue.

Q: Still over on Badger Avenue. And how did you get to the 140 Line.

Bradwell: Sometime I would take a bus down there. Sometime I would walk down to Elizabeth Avenue.

Q: How long did it take you to get to work then?

Bradwell: About forty minutes. But so many times you was stuck on Route 22. Until, I started driving in 53. And then I drove to work. And I used Springfield Avenue instead of Route 22.

Q: Was that your first car?

Bradwell: Yes it was.

Q: Did you ever drive your husband's car?

Bradwell: No.

Q: Could you drive then?

Bradwell: No. He taught me to drive.

Q: Did you guys ever have a strike?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: What was that like?

Bradwell: That was rough cause we were out there about six weeks. And I don't even, now, I don't even remember why we struck. And don't know if we got what we struck for.

Q: So you, well, I guess being the shop steward, you were out on the line.

Bradwell: Yes. But I just don't remember the details.

Q: Do you remember any of the experience about being on the line? Was it dangerous?

Bradwell: No. It wasn't dangerous. Cause there wasn't anybody attempting to talk to us, just the foreman. And they didn't attempt to bring in any strike breakers, anything like that. Our biggest problem was attempting to stop the trucks that was coming in with materials and things.

Q: So how long did you work for Engelhardt?

Bradwell: I worked for Engelhardt about thirty years. Considering, together with the time when I was sick, all in all it was thirty years.

Q: Did you retire from there?

Bradwell: No.

Q: What happened?

Bradwell: They shut down that division where I worked. They closed out that division where I worked. And they put us out of a job.

Q: How did you feel?

Bradwell: I felt very badly because they didn't even give us our benefits or anything. They didn't give us our severance pay. They told, I don't know who was responsible. Maybe the union sold us out. Because we had a closing clause in our contract. But they called in the union to negotiate closing contact, and they did us out of our severance pay.

Q: So, were you still active with the union at this time?

Bradwell: Yes, but no, I was just a member at the time.

Q: What happened after that? How did you manage?

Bradwell: Well, I got a --

Q: About how old were you when that happened? Or either about what year, either one.

Bradwell: What year was that?

Q: I finished high school in '69. '73.

Bradwell: When they shut down that one division and they moved and didn't give us severance pay. They only gave us what they call a lump sum of money. But it didn't even amount to a thousand dollars. So naturally everybody was furious. But after that, I got sick after that.

Q: Okay. So did you, did you ever do any casual or part-time work and piece work or anything like that?

Bradwell: Well, I got another job after I left, after I was feeling better, and I worked for what's close over here on Central Avenue, this photo place for a while when I left there.

Q: So about how long did you work there?

Bradwell: Oh, about eight months.

Q: So this was still before you were, you still weren't sixty years old then. And I guess you couldn't draw your Social Security yet?

Bradwell: Well, I applied for my Social Security under disability because I started having a problem with the muscles in my arm. After three years, I finally got benefits from Social Security under disability.

Q: So did you work anyplace else in the interim?

Bradwell: No. Because once you go on disability, you, I was unable to work.

Q: Were you ever unemployed from the time that you went to work when you came to Newark, other than when the company, you know, closed down on you all, were you ever unemployed?

Bradwell: Not really. Because I went from one factory to the other, and then I stayed there for, this happened. I mean, until they shut down. And for one small, I mean, one eight-month period in there, I went on welfare while I was waiting for my Social Security to come through.

Q: And what were the common occupations for black men and women in Newark when you came here?

Bradwell: Oh, there was plenty of work in Newark at the time. Cause this was a manufacturing hub., There was plenty of work in Newark. They had the chemical plants, and they have all kinds of manufacturing. So there was plenty of work.

Q: Did blacks enter any new occupations while you, when you were here? I mean, other than the typical, the kind of work that you just described. Do you know any black folks who did anything outside of those occupations?

Bradwell: Yeah. There were some people that went into politics, there were some that went into the Post Office, and different, many started to get office jobs.

Q: Do you remember whether people had any difficulties in getting these positions? I mean publicly, I mean was there ever anything in the papers or anything?

Bradwell: Well, you got to remember that affirmative action came along during those years. So it made it much easier for blacks to move into certain jobs that they wasn't in before.

Q: So what about what decade are we talking about, are you talking about now?

Bradwell: Well, you know, this is the 60s, right?

Q: Okay.

Bradwell: Yeah. Back with the Civil Rights Movement.

Q: Do you still have any, any kind of materials from your work experience? Like, got any old pay stubs or uniforms or badges?

Bradwell: No. We didn't have uniforms. And we would use more or less the smock that we bought ourselves.

Q: Still know where it is?

Bradwell: No. I didn't keep no pay stubs. And no.

Q: What about your church activities? What church do you belong to or did you belong to?

Bradwell: I belong to Asa Memorial. That's the only church I joined after I left the south. The only church I've ever been to.

Q: And were you active as a member of that church?

Bradwell: For quite a number of years. I'm not active now. I worked with the youth department and the missionaries and other different organizations, like the Daughters of Allah.

Q: What are the daughters of Allah?

Bradwell: That's a club that was organized for the betterment, development of the church and the missionary work.

Q: Do you know anything about this history of your church?

Bradwell: Some. I know it was started by Reverend Allen. I knew that their home base was in Philadelphia. Mother church is in Philadelphia. Also the church that they walked out of when they organized A&E was Israel Memorial.

Q: Do you know any outstanding ministers or members? We can say Israel Memorial or the A&E Church.

Bradwell: Yeah. Dr. Carnes, the founder. And at some point, Reverend Jesse Jackson was acting for the pastor. And then there's Reverend Martley. And Reverend Jackson at St. Matthew's, and there's quite a number of ministers.

Q: What do you consider to be an accomplishment of that church?

Bradwell: Accomplishment of theirs?

Q: Its major accomplishment or any accomplishment.



Bradwell: Its major accomplishment was the Christmas that they paid off the mortgage. They burned the mortgage.

Q: So, what happened that they accumulated a new mortgage?

Bradwell: Do they have a new mortgage?

Q: No. I mean the one that they burned.

Bradwell: That was they built a new church.

Q: Because?

Bradwell: Their old church burned.

Q: Where was the old church located?

Bradwell: The old church was located on. Is that Lincoln Street? No, the new church is on Lincoln Street. Mercer Street. The old church was on 21 Mercer Street.

Q: Where's the new church?

Bradwell: It's on Lincoln. Right across the street from the site of the old church.

Q: Do you remember what the neighborhood was like when the church was on Mercer?

Bradwell: It was two and three-family homes. And it's near High Street there and the Catholic Church and school.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

Q: Willie Bradwell, tape two, side two. Do you remember what was next to the old church on Mercer? Do you remember the bath house?

Bradwell: That's right. That bath house was there. That's right. An old bath house was there.

Q: And actually the first church was originally a synagogue, which a lot of the churches are in Newark now.

Bradwell: It was a synagogue.

Q: So how much do you participate in any social or cultural organizations in Newark? For instance, do you belong to the Eastern Stars or any? Do you play cards? Do you belong to any societies or?

Bradwell: No. I don't belong to any societies and I don't play cards. So I, at this late day in the game, I've just about retired from everything. I still work part-time.

Q: Where do you work?

Bradwell: I work at the [?].

Q: What do you do?

Bradwell: I'm an attendant there. But aside from that, I kind of stick to my leisure life.

Q: Did you ever belong to any social clubs?

Bradwell: Yes I did. At one time I belonged to a social club, some years back.

Q: What were some of the things that you, was it a mixed group? Was it all women?

Bradwell: All women.

Q: What were some of the things that you?

Bradwell: We were associated with some of the male clubs. We used to sponsor dances and cocktail sets, fashion shows and things like that.

Q: What were some of the places that you used to hold these events?

Bradwell: Lorch Manor which is long gone. And the Terrace Room. The Coleman Ballroom which is no more in existence. And then there used to be another club called the Wild Rate.

Q: Where was that?

Bradwell: It was on Brown Street by the Carlisle. Then some of the chapters, we would have cocktail sets.

Q: Tell me about the Globetrotters?

Bradwell: The Globetrotters was a private club that was organized by one of the male social clubs. And they bought this field on Lincoln Park which is still in existence. This private club. We used to have affairs there also. As a matter of fact, it used to be the hangout for all the different groups. Course now I don't know if it's still winging in that way or not.

Q: Were there contests between these clubs or did they visit each other?

Bradwell: No, there wasn't contests. But they was always socially because they all would have whatever affairs you had, they could participated from it. So your affairs was always successful. Cause you had a round of different clubs and organizations that they made sure that they patronized you and you patronized them. You had to send your dates out at the first of the year so they wouldn't coincide, cross over with anybody else's. And it was a fun thing.

Q: And well organized sounds like.

Bradwell: Well organized. No competition. It was one of the heydays.

Q: Can you remember some of the names of any of these other social clubs?

Bradwell: We were the Trojans, and it was the Silver Dollars, it was Warriors, the Globe Trotters, and so many more. I really can't.

Q: Wasn't it? There's a name that I've seen on one of the avenues. Was there Overton, or, was that the name of it? Overbee.

Bradwell: I don't remember. Might have been.

Q: On Keith Avenue.

Bradwell: That was probably the name of the club. Cause, but there were a lot of them. There was a lot of them. But then it would have four or five or six women, it was never usually over twelve members. Most time it was between six and eight members. So any six or eight people got together, they would organize a club. And we'd draw up a charter and there we'd go.

Q: What kind of things would be in your charter?

Bradwell: Well, we just had to get a charter so that when we have affairs we would be legal. That was the reason for the charter. We had to get a charter from the City.

Q: Really.

Bradwell: Cause otherwise, because when we hired a band, we had to make sure that the band was unionized.

Q: That's right there were no records. Well, I mean, there were records but when you guys had dances you didn't play records.

Bradwell: No, well the musicians were in a union. And they was making sure that you used the union guys when you had live entertainment. So that's why, but the reason for the charter was so you could get a permit when you had the dances and things like that, you had to have a charter.

Q: So what about political activities? Were you politically active?

Bradwell: We wasn't involved in anything political.

Q: No, I mean you now, you.

Bradwell: Not really. I've never been too involved in politics.

Q: Did you ever work on the polls or anything?

Bradwell: I worked on the polls because doing the job, that was one of our paid holidays, Election Day. And that was so that we could work on the polls. Yes, I worked on the polls.

Q: What about community activities? Any neighborhood groups other than social, the social

club?

Bradwell: Only the block association that we have for our neighborhood.

Q: What did the block association do? Or what was their purpose anyway?

Bradwell: The purpose is to maintain the livelihood and help people of the block and things like that. And look out for the crime and crime watch and things.

Q: So what neighborhood was this now? Was this still Badger Avenue?

Bradwell: No. This was on the west side.

Q: Well, actually, when you left Badger Avenue, where did you move?

Bradwell: When I left Badger Avenue, where did I move?

Q: So when you left Badger?

Bradwell: When I left Badger Avenue, I moved to Seymour Avenue.

Q: All right. And then have you lived anyplace else in Newark?

Bradwell: From Seymour Avenue I moved to Renner Avenue. And from Renner Avenue I bought the house on West End Avenue.

Q: And you live on West End Avenue now?

Bradwell: No. I live in the senior citizens, 1060 Broad Street, Lincoln Park.

Q: How long have you been living here?

Bradwell: Six or seven years.

Q: All right. Did you ever take on any economic, did you ever start anything, or did you ever run a business or anything associated with a business?

Bradwell: No.

Q: Okay. Now your second husband, he was a contractor or construction worker?

Bradwell: He was a contractor. He did tile, plastering.

Q: Did he work on his own or?

Bradwell: He worked on his own.

Q: He was self-employed?

Bradwell: Self-employed.

Q: Well, what about selling dinners? I can remember you guys endeavoring to sell dinners in the neighborhood.

Bradwell: Yeah, we used to sell dinners. But I didn't consider that a business.

Q: You made money didn't you? [Laughter]

Bradwell: We made some. It was convenient after while.

Q: How did you get your information about what was going? How did you get news and information about what was going on in the community?

Bradwell: Well, I always read the paper or listened to the radio. And talking with other people about this and that.

Q: What papers did you read?

Bradwell: The Star Ledger and the old Newark Evening News before it went out of business. And I had read the one or two of the New York papers, but not regular.

Q: Was there a black paper in this area?

Bradwell: Yes. There was a black paper that I used to read.

Q: What was that?

Bradwell: The Afro. It's out of business now.

Q: Did you read that regularly?

Bradwell: Yes. It came out once a week.

Q: What about radio? Did you listen to the radio?

Bradwell: Yes.

Q: Do you remember what stations you listened to?



Bradwell: WNER, WHBI, mostly. And then there was television in later years. And put your radio off to watch television.

Q: What about would any, did you listen to any black stations on the radio?

Bradwell: Yes. WHBI was more or less you got most of the black news.

Q: What about WNJR?

Bradwell: WNJR yes.

Q: What was the relationship between the black community in Newark and other black communities in New Jersey?

Bradwell: I wouldn't no.

Q: You didn't venture out too much.

Bradwell: No. I went into like the Oranges, Montclair, Elizabeth, places like that. But I really didn't see that much difference in the community.

Q: Atmosphere was pretty much the same as Newark?

Bradwell: Atmosphere was pretty much the same.

Q: Okay. Have you ever met any outstanding African-Americans in Newark? Or even if you didn't meet them, hear of any outstanding African-Americans in Newark?

Bradwell: Doctors.

Q: You remember any names?

Bradwell: Dr. Dawson, Dr. Savers. My first optometrist, Dr. McAndrews. I'm trying to think. And some councilman I consider outstanding. Like Councilman Reich and George Branch.

Q: Okay. What do you remember about such public servants as the policemen, the fire fighters, social workers?

Bradwell: Well, I haven't had too much contact with either of those.

Q: Do you know how the people in the neighborhood thought about them or considered them?

Bradwell: Well, some people in the neighborhood are not too fond of the policemen. The fact that they don't. I can't say recently. When I was living in a neighborhood other than where I am now, they didn't respond to calls frequently. But where I'm living now, if you call a policeman, they come right away. But when in the neighborhood, you could call and the just might put you on hold.

Q: When you or maybe somebody else in the neighborhood, you know, had some kind of a problem or had some trouble or needed some kind of help to solve a problem, who did people in Newark turn to when they had a problem?

Bradwell: Mostly city councilmen I believe. Or either they would go through their ministers.

Q: Were they effective do you think?

Bradwell: Sometimes. I don't think all the time they were. Like, for instance, I had a car stolen in Newark recently, not too long ago. And they charged me for storage which I didn't think was fair. And then when they found the car, instead of calling me they sent me a registered letter, and

then the policeman tells me when I go down to get a release that that department don't even work on weekends. So I don't think that I should have had to pay for four or five days of storage when they could have called me right away. But those kind of things with policeman are I guess in your life and things like that.

Q: How was black Newark perceived? Do you think, was it considered a slum?

Bradwell: It wasn't considered a slum when I first came into Newark.

Q: Do you think it's considered a slum now?

Bradwell: In some areas I do. Because I don't feel like they takes care of the neighborhood as well as they could. As far as picking up the trash and sweeping the streets.

Q: And who would that be? Who are you referring to? Who's they?

Bradwell: The City of Newark. I guess the person who is responsible for the street cleaning, things like that.

Q: So what was the perception of Newark when you were younger?

Bradwell: You know when I was younger, it's hard for me to answer that question because a lot of things that I pay attention to in later years, I didn't pay any attention to then. In fact, when I was young and came into Newark, it never occurred to me that when they were sweeping the streets, or keeping it clean, or what not. I just didn't pay any. I didn't start paying attention to things like that until after my children started growing up and things like that.

Q: Did all classes of African-Americans live in the same neighborhood, or was it pretty much all working class or think it was pretty much mixed?

Bradwell: Some places were mixed. Because for a while they were kind of balled up. They couldn't move up.

Q: And who would they be?

Bradwell: I mean the ones that had gotten to the point where they could afford to move out. So everybody was living together at one time.

Q: How did they all get along?

Bradwell: As far as I could, they said they were getting along all right.

Q: Did you ever experience any classism from other black folks?

Bradwell: Don't remember.

Q: Other than white store owners and maybe some other whites who had a vested economic interest, do you recall any other whites having an interest in the black community?

Bradwell: If there were, I wasn't aware of them. Only, I mean, if they moved out, they would rent the house so they started being landlords in certain areas. Other than that. I don't remember.

Q: Did you shop downtown?

Bradwell: Yes. I shopped downtown.

Q: What stores?

Bradwell: Bambergers, mostly. Hanes, Lerner Shops and there was another store moved out and

don't even remember the name of it now..

Q: Can you remember all of the department stores that ever were in Newark?

Bradwell: I know Ohrbachs and Hanes and Bambergers. Those were the three major ones. And Kleins.

Q: Do you remember Kresges?

Bradwell: And Kresges and Kleins.

Q: Which one do you consider to have been Newark's best store or stores?

Bradwell: Hanes was close to Bambergers. A little more exclusive than Bambergers. Ohrbachs and Kleins were kind of.

Q: Did you ever experience any problems shopping in any of those stores?

Bradwell: No. I didn't. I've heard of people having problems in Hanes, but I never did.

Q: Can you remember when they first started hiring blacks?

Bradwell: No. I can't remember that year. I remember when there wasn't any only the ones that was cleaning the rest rooms or running the elevators. And then there were salespeople, but I can't remember what year it was.

Q: What do you remember about the Mayor of Springfield Avenue?

Bradwell: Who was the Mayor of Springfield Avenue? I don't remember nothing about the

Mayor of Springfield Avenue.

Q: I can't help you with that one. I don't know either. I'm gonna ask you about some folks who were in Newark and you tell me what you know or remember about them. These are local personalities. William Ashby.

Bradwell: William Ashby I remember very well because he was one of the organizers of the Urban League. And I also, he did some legal work for me some time.

Q: Is that right. What about Meyer Ellingstein?

Bradwell: Meyer Ellingstein had a.

Q: He was Newark's first Jewish mayor.

Bradwell: Yes. I remember the name. But like I said at that time I wasn't interested in politics. But I do remember the name.

Q: Okay. Prosper Brewer.

Bradwell: Yeah.

Q: He was an activist.

Bradwell: I remember him.

Q: You remember anything about?

Bradwell: No. The name I know more. I can't really tell you what he did, but I do remember his

name.

Q: What about Irving Turner?

Bradwell: Irving Turner was the first black councilman. He was a character.

Q: Was he? How so?

Bradwell: Well, I mean, he was a, he was a nice person. He was a nice person. He was our first black councilman.

Q: What do you remember regarding black institutions like hospitals, hotels, banks?

Bradwell: There was one black hospital on West Kenney Street, community hospital, that I remember. It was a small hospital that catered to people and a lot of black doctors there.

Q: What do you think happened to it?

Bradwell: Well, I guess it was, that they just didn't have enough patients to maintain.

Q: Is that because, I mean?

Bradwell: It was probably because of the doctors sending their patients to other hospitals, more or less, I guess.

Q: Were, I mean, is that because the hospitals were beginning to open their doors to black patients where they didn't before or?

Bradwell: Well, you could use the other hospitals then. But it was a small hospital just like Baptist

Hospital on Lincoln Avenue that went out too which was a white hospital. The small hospitals had problems with size.

Q: I was born at Baptist Hospital. Is that building still standing?

Bradwell: Yes. It's a church now.

Q: Is it? What about hotels or banks?

Bradwell: There was the Coleman brothers had a hotel on Fourth Street. And if there was a black bank back then, the only black bank I know now is the one that beside Krueger Mansion. But there was a black hotel, Coleman brothers, on Fourth Street.

Q: What about the Divine?

Bradwell: Oh the Divine. Would you consider that a black hotel?

Q: Well, I don't know. I'm. What would you consider Father Divine?

Bradwell: He was black, but he was kind of like a pope. I don't know what kind of hotel you'd call it. A man needs to stay with his wife in the room.

Q: Really.

Bradwell: Men and women had to be separate.

Q: You know, what do you remember about Father Divine in Newark?

Bradwell: The only thing I remember about Father Divine in Newark is he used to go to Father



Divine for anything. And you'd get a whole meal.

Q: Over there where the Divine Hotel is now?

Bradwell: No. It was located in some other place before he bought the other. But a lot of people used to go there and eat. And he only charged you a nickel or a dime. But that's all I knew about him.

Q: How important do you think those institutions were to the black community? That hospital, that hotel.

Bradwell: They probably were, they served a purpose at a time when they were needed. But as we usually do, once something else open up to us, we forget about what sort of trouble we used to get. That's probably the reason that the hotel didn't survive. It might be part of the group in the hospitals.

Q: What about music? Music in Newark.

Bradwell: There used to plenty of jazz clubs in Newark. You always found music. But I can't tell you all the name of the clubs because I couldn't patronize the clubs that much.

Q: Why was that?

Bradwell: I just didn't go. Because our club was having a fit one of the places or something. I usually just didn't go out to the clubs. But I liked to dance, and I usually went to a dance, but went because there were dances every weekend someplace.

Q: Can you remember some of the musicians or singers who used to come through here?

Bradwell: But you won't have time for me to come to my head.

Q: Okay. What about gospel or blues?

Bradwell: Gospel was always around. Oh Mr. Hancock's music.

Q: Where was that?

Bradwell: It was located up Springfield Avenue near Tenth Street, up in the, where Eighteenth Avenue come across. The building is gone now. But Olive Garden used to have, Ronnie Williams used to sponsor their gospel shows. And everybody came. That's the first place I saw Aretha Franklin.

Q: When she was singing gospel?

Bradwell: Gospel with her father, the Reverend Theo Franklin. And the Blind Boys and all those and Mahalia Jackson. All those came to Olive Garden. Every Sunday practically we were in Olive Garden for a gospel show.

Q: I remember you telling a story about when the Blind Boys were there.

Bradwell: The Blind Boys they were there and somebody hollered fire.

Q: What happened?

Bradwell: Well, everybody started running. I mean, the manager and the Blind Boys was on stage singing. And they were selling hotdogs over on the side, and somebody knocked the pot over and it was just steam going up and someone hollered fire. And the manager was the only one of the Blind Boys who could see, and he ran off and let them.

Q: So what did they do?

Bradwell: Well, they held hands and, you know, they was trying to move off the stage. And somebody went back and got them. But the manager, he forgot them for a minute.

Q: And when I also remember you telling me a story Mahalia Jackson when she came in here.

Bradwell: Well she was up at school stadium that night and running, she refused, just refused to do the rest of her concert until she got her money. And she was very demanding. And she just refused to go back on stage until she got her money.

Q: What about, did you see Sissey Houston coming up when she was singing? What was those, the Drinkers?

Bradwell: The Drinker Singers. Yes. They a member of St. Luke's family church. And they always sung. Their father was a minister.

Q: Do you remember his name?

Bradwell: He was a minister. What was his name. I don't remember it now. They used to have a lot of singing, concerts.

Q: So when you weren't at a dance, what did you do with your leisure? What other things did you like to do?

Bradwell: I always liked the movies. And we used to go to the parks. And years back, Public Service used to run special buses on Sundays to different spots. And we used to take those rides to like up in Pennsylvania, like the Roadside America, caves in Pennsylvania, and things like that.

Q: So what parks did you go to?

Bradwell: Wheatworth Park in Branchville. And one time we went up to Dupont Gardens out in Philadelphia. And up South Orange, that sort of thing.

Q: And what movies did you go, what theaters?

Bradwell: The Savvoy, Essex House.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO; BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE THREE

Q: Bradwell, Tape 3, Side A. And I was asking you about which movie theaters you went to?

Bradwell: I told you Savvoy, Essex and National. And there was a movie on Clinton Avenue, was that the?

Q: The Avon.

Bradwell: The Avon. And I used to go downtown to the Adams and the Fairmount and the Grant also.

Q: Okay. Did you have any other hobbies?

Bradwell: We used to play for peanuts. We didn't have any fruit, played for peanuts once in a while.

Q: What can you tell me about the Newark Eagles?

Bradwell: Well, the Newark Eagles was a baseball team, a Newark baseball team, that everybody went, every Sunday they played in the stadium. Or any time they was in the stadium we went to the game. We didn't want to miss that. That was one of the highlights. And I think everybody

used to go down there.

Q: Where did they play?

Bradwell: At the school stadium down at.

Q: Is that where they're going to build the new stadium, or is that where the new baseball stadium is going to be or was it?

Bradwell: No. It's supposed to be someplace else, but I haven't been able to determine cause they say something about the end of Broad Street somewhere, and I can't see no place for it.

Q: But that's not where the Newark Eagles played though? Down there.

Bradwell: They played down there. But, no, the new stadium is supposed to be built someplace else.

Q: Did you go to the games?

Bradwell: Oh yes.

Q: You have any pictures?

Bradwell: No. I wouldn't know where they are.

Q: Do you recall anything about the seamy side of Newark? Were there any areas of Newark that you considered to be like the underside, the seamy side?

Bradwell: There probably were, but like I say I didn't go out that much clubbing and all. But

there were some bars that everybody didn't go to cause anything could happen at those.

Q: Do you remember what areas they were in? Like what streets they were on, or even the names of the bars.

Bradwell: Not really. I really don't. Cause like I say I never went into the bars too much.

Q: Do you recall any black gangsters?

Bradwell: No. And if I come in contact with them, and didn't know they were gangsters.

Q: Do you ever remember hearing anybody talk about any black gangsters?

Bradwell: You heard people talk about it about people in the rackets. But we never, I never seen any.

Q: Now, I started asking you a little something about the school system when we were talking about when Kenneth started Bergen Street School. What do you recall about public education in Newark?

Bradwell: Mostly I know when my daughter started in school, Like I say, we were living in Ridgewood Avenue. My son had to go all the way back to Eighteenth Avenue school. And then when we moved to Seymour Avenue, we were right across the street from Avon School, but most of the black kids in that area were sent back to Eighteenth Avenue school. And I remember one night we marched on the Board of Education, that was under Reverend Collier, a whole a group of us went down there demanding that the kids from this area would go to the school in the neighborhood. So my daughter, instead of having to go Eighteenth Avenue school, she was allowed to go into Avon Avenue school. But I always did feel that Clinton Place was built to prevent a lot of these black schools from going into white schools. Because I had a feeling that

they figured by the time they got two years of high school, most of them would drop out. I could be wrong, but that's the feeling I always had why that school was built.

Q: That's interesting. How well academically did black students seem to perform?

Bradwell: They performed well. I thought they performed well. I pulled my daughter out of Clinton Place High School because a problem I had with one her teachers because he refused to put the correct grades on the report card. Cause he said he was keeping the correct grades in his little book, and I couldn't see that. And I don't think she was happy about moving, but at the time I wasn't thinking about that because I was under the impression that the grades that she got then would follow her. That the grades they use to get into college. So I moved her out of Clinton Place into Wheatworth. She didn't finish at Clinton Place.

Q: So how do you think your children, and then there's an age gap between your children. So they went to schools in different decades. How do you think your two children were treated by the white teachers when they were in school?

Bradwell: I never got, aside from that incident at Clinton Place, I never got anything else concrete to do with treatment. I do know that when my son was in Southside, they were, student council was trying to kind of steer everybody into vocational schools instead of telling them that they should be taking college credit. But, aside from that, I don't think that there was a problem with anything with the teachers. I'm not aware of it.

Q: Okay. Do you recall any of your children's teachers. The black ones that, do you recall any of them, was there any teacher that your children had that made an impression on you?

Bradwell: As a teacher.

Q: Yes. If you don't remember any of them, that's fine. But I just wanted to ask you if any of

your children's teachers made any impression on you that you can recall.

Bradwell: Yeah. There were a couple, but I'm not too good at names. So instead of saying the wrong name, I will leave that.

Q: Okay. Do you kind of recall why or?

Bradwell: Well, I know my daughter's English teacher and one of her grade teachers that took a special interest in her.

Q: Were black students involved in sports or any extracurricular activities?

Bradwell: Yes, they were.

Q: Remember what kind of activities, different activities?

Bradwell: Football, cheerleading, the chorus, the band.

Q: What would you consider to be the five most important events or developments that happened in Newark during the time that you lived here? I mean, whether it was a strike or a particular or riot, some kind of disaster or, you know, black migration? And I really didn't want to lead you in those directions, but can you think of five things that you consider to be the most important events or developments to Newark since you've been here?

Bradwell: Well, of course, I go back like from the first black councilman and the first black mayor. And that's all right now.

Q: Well, don't worry about that.



Bradwell: And I'm not thinking too clearly.

Q: Well, that's all right. And if you think of something later, we can come back to that. That's okay.

Bradwell: And before we leave, I do remember the riots.

Q: Did you have any personal involvement in any of these three things that you mentioned? The first black councilman, the first black mayor, the riots.

Bradwell: I was voting when the councilman and the mayor. I had no participation in the riots because when it started, when I was out of town. And I came back into town in the middle of it. And I knew I had to walk right through all those soldiers and shooting over my head all the way from, I was living on Renner Avenue at the time. All the way from Bergen Street to Renner and Audubon Terrace cause I couldn't get a cab into that area.

Q: So how did you get home?

Bradwell: I got a cab from Penn Station, but the closest they could get me home was Miles Avenue and I got off at Miles Avenue and Bergen Street and walked.

Q: With your suitcases?

Bradwell: With my bag. And I was told later, I was lucky I didn't get shot cause I had these bags. But the troopers just shot over my head.

Q: Deliberately or you were just in the line of fire?

Bradwell: Deliberately. Because I was walking the street, there was other people walking the

streets. And I guess it was it was fear tactics or whatever. But all on Bergen Street But then when I got to Renner Avenue and turned north, they didn't follow you.

Q: So they were following you up the street?

Bradwell: Well, they were on Bergen Street, like on each side of Bergen Street. They had it cordoned off. The whole neighborhood was cordoned off from Elizabeth Avenue. See a cab could come up Elizabeth Avenue to Miles Avenue and go up Miles Avenue, but it couldn't come anywhere down in that area. That was cordoned off. No cars could move through it. You could walk through. But he told, the cab driver told me after I got in the cab, you should have left your bags in the station. But I said, I'm taking my bags home. So that's the chance I took.

Q: Well, I'm glad you got home okay. In what major ways has Newark changed since you first got here?

Bradwell: Well, housing has changed for one thing. Neighborhoods have changed. And there's less jobs and there's more homelessness than there was then. Then it was then.

Q: How do you view these changes?

Bradwell: I don't know. It's kind of hopeless seeing the things. I mean, sometimes you think it's coming back and you look, and it look nothing's coming to calm it.

Q: What traditions or celebrations or events in Newark that you witnessed in the past that no longer exist?

Bradwell: Excuse me.

Q: What are some of the things that Newark used to do they don't do anymore? Like some kinds

of celebrations or traditions.

Bradwell: I don't know of any that they don't do anymore. One they're doing now that they didn't do then and that's the [?]. They wasn't doing that. But other than that, the same parades and everything.

Q: When do you feel that black life in Newark reached its highest peak?

Bradwell: I believe it was right before the riots to me. Seems more of a togetherness or whatever. But since the riots, everybody seems to be separate.

Q: What about Newark's lowest point?

Bradwell: That'd be the homelessness and the poor.

Q: Okay, I'm going to switch gears here a little bit more and. Did you ever meet Louise Scott, Madame Scott?

Bradwell: You know, I've been in her presence, but I never held a conversation with her.

Q: Did you know her? What do you recall about her.

Bradwell: I, usually seen she had a nice personality. And she was very friendly and outward. But like I say, I didn't know her personally. I've been in her presence.

Q: What was the community perception of her?

Bradwell: They seemed to think highly of her.

Q: And what do you know about the High Street area where the Krueger-Scott Mansion is now?

Bradwell: That used to be one of those classy streets, where all the fine homes. And all of that.

Q: Tell me about the time after the war when your brother was walking down High Street.

Bradwell: Well, he, my brother, my youngest brother, after the War came into Newark. And he was also living with his older brother on Spottswood Street. And he was just walking along High Street admiring the homes and looking, and he was picked up by the cops. Because they thought that he was casing the place and looking for some place to rob. And they only held him until his brother went down to collect him. So they didn't charge him when they realized that he was just looking.

Q: Was he in uniform?

Bradwell: No, he wasn't in uniform. But he was just admiring the houses. And my brother says you see a lot of fine looking homes on High Street. And he was just walking along admiring the houses and looking around. And they thought he was looking for some place to rob.

Q: Did you know anybody that ever worked in any of those houses on High Street?

Bradwell: No. I didn't.

Q: What do you remember about, did you know anything about the history of the Kruegers? Remember the brewery?

Bradwell: Yes And I used to be a Krueger Ballroom on Belmont Avenue.

Q: Really?

Bradwell: Yes. They on Belmont Avenue used to have a lot of dances and affairs there. The brewery was on Belmont Avenue and so was the ballroom.

Q: I remember that statue. Do you remember what that statue looked like outside the brewery?

Bradwell: I really don't.

Q: I remember it because it was so much. Do you remember riding by there and how I used to react when I used to ride by that statue?

Bradwell: Yeah You wanted that statue and you wanted the Budweiser too. And you also wanted a monkey.

Q: Well, I didn't get any of them. Okay, coming to a close now. How would you sum up your experience of living in Newark?

Bradwell: It's been an experience. To sum it up, some has been good. Some has been bad. But all in all, it hasn't been too bad because I think I was one of the lucky ones that I never really been out of work. Only times when I was working and always managed to maintain a life through that. Never really having all the things I wanted, but accomplished some of the things. So all and all it hasn't been. It could have been better. But it hasn't been a total loss.

Q: If you had it to do all over again, when you left Buffalo, would you live in Newark? Would you come to Newark?

Bradwell: You know, a lot of times I think about that and I still don't know. I still don't know. A lot of good things have happened to me in Newark. More so than real bad things. I've had some bad experiences. But some to stay.

Q: Well. I want to thank you for your time Mrs. Bradwell. I know this was expensive. And I want to thank my mother. So I'm signing off this tape now.

END OF INTERVIEW